

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-02 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00
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AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USMISSION USUN
USINT HAVANA
CINCPAC
DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0153

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MOPS, PBOR, ET, SO
SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER CONFIRMS HARAR FIGHTING, CAPTURE OF CUBANS

REF: MOGADISCIO 0151 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE SOMALI FOREIGN MINISTER ASSERTED JAN 25 THAT
THE OFFENSIVE PRESIDENT SIAD FORESAW HAD BEEN LAUNCHED WITH
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GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE GSDR. HE REPORTED THE ROUT OF A
CUBAN ALLIERY BATTALION AND CAPTURE OF CUBANS AS WELL AS THE
DEATHS OF OTHER CAUCASIANS IN THE FITHING IN AND AROUND HARAR.
THE MINISTER SAID AIR SURVEILLANCE OF NORTHERN SOMALIA INCLUD-
ING THE NORTH COAST CONTINUED. THE GSDR, HE SAID, FEARS
AN ATTACK FROM THE SEA AS WELL AS THE LAND. END SUMMARY

2. FOREIGN MINISTER ABDIRAHMAN JAMA BARRE SUMMONED THE CHARGE TO THE MINISTRY THIS MORNING TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE ANTICIPATED OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC WAS LUANCHED ON JANUARY 22. THE MINISTER, REFERRING TO THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE CHARGE AND WESTERN AMBASSADORS ON JAN 16, AGAIN ASSERTED THAT THE AIM OF THE ETHIOPIAN ATTACK, CONCERTED BY THE SOVIETS, IS TO GAIN CONTROL OF SOMALIA'S NORTH COAST. HE CHARACTERIZED THE SITUATION AS DANGEROUS AND GRAVE AND SAID THE GSDR FEARS AN ATTACK FROM THE SEA AS WELL AS THE LAND. ABDIRAHMAN SAID THAT DAILY HOSTILE AIR SURVEILLANCE OF HARGESIA AND BERBERA CONTINUED. MOREOVER, HE SAID THAT THERE WERE REGULAR FLIGHTS ALONG THE COAST FROM BOSASO TO BERBERA. THE GSDR, THE MINISTER CONTINUED, SUSPECTS SOME OF THESE FLIGHTS ORIGINATE FROM A SOVIET AIRCRAFT CARRIER OFF SHORE. HE SAID THE GSDR COULD NOT PROVE THAT BECAUSE ITS NAVAL FORCES WERE TOO SMALL, BUT HE DID ASSERT THAT GSDR RADARS TRACKED HOSTILE AIRCRAFT OUT TO SEA. (HE ALSO NOTED IN RESPONSE TO A LATER QUESTION THAT THE GSDR MILITARY WERE CONVINCED ON ONE OCCASION HOSTILE AIRCRAFT HAD FLOWN TO THE PDRY.)

3. THE MINISTER SAID THAT IN THE PRELIMINARY BATTLES THE SOVIET CONCERTED FORCES HAD BEEN REPULSED. HE SAID THE DANAB REPORTS WERE ACCURATE - WSLF FORCES WERE FIGHTING IN HARAR AND CUBANS WERE CAPTURED. SCARCELY CONFIDENTIAL

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ABLE TO CONCEAL HIS SATISFACTION, HE REPORTED THAT A CUBAN ARTILLERY BATTALION WAS SURROUNDED, REFUSED TO SURRENDER, AND HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY ROUTED WITH ONLY A DOZEN OR SO OF ITS PERSONNEL ESCAPING. ABDIRAHMAN SAID THAT CUBAN PRISONERS WOULD BE SHOWN TO THE WORLD. THE MINISTER ADDED THAT SEVERAL CAUCASIANS HAD ALSO BEEN KILLED IN THE LATEST FIGHTING. THE GSDR SIUSPECTED CASUALTIES INCLUDED SOVIETS AND EAST GERMANS, BUT HE SAID THERE WAS NO VERIFICATION AS YET. PHOTOGRAPHS, HE CONTINUED, WOULD BE RELEASED. ABDIRAHMAN ASSERTED VERY SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS WERE EMPLOYED AGAINST THE WSLF FORCES. HE COULD NOT YET IDENTIFY THESE WEAPONS, BUT SAID THERE WOULD BE FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE SUBSEQUENTLY. ABDIRAHMAN ADDED THAT AT LEAST 17 SORTIES HAD BEEN FLOWN AGAINST WSLF FORCES SINCE JAN 22. THE PLANES, THE SOMALIS BELIEVE BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH MIGS,VSQDE NOT FLOWN B6 ETHIOPIAN PILOTS. THE MINISTER RLIN REFERRED TO THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION, AND ASKED THE CHARGE TO CONVEY HIS MESSAGE TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

4. WHEN THE CHARGE REMARKED THAT THE SITUATION DID

NOT APPEAR TO BE VERY GRAVE FROM THE SOMALI
POINT OF VIEW, IN FACT TO THE CONTRARY, THE MINISTER
REPLIED THAT IT WAS ONLY A QUESTION OF TIME BEFORE THE
SUPERIOR EQUIPMENT OF THE SOVIET ALLIES BEGAN TO MAKE
ITSELF FELT. BEFORE THE CHARGE COULD PROBE FURTHER,
THE MINISTER ROSE AND EXCUSED HIMSELF EXPLAINING THAT
HE HAD SEVERAL OTHER APPOINTMENTS TO KEEP.

5. THE BRITISH, FRENCH, AND ITALIAN AMBASSADORS WERE IN
THE WINGS. PRESUMABLY THE FOREIGN MINISTER CONVEYED
RTHE SAME MESSAGE TO THEM.
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